

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 DPW-01 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 SAJ-01 SAM-01 DRC-01

/131 W

----- 130900

R 010958Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8818

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

USSAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 3491

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MCAP, PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH DEFENSE MINISTER SISOUK

1. I MET WITH DEFENSE MINISTER SISOUK THIS MORNING FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM THE ADB MEETING. USING FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI'S INTERVIEW WITH JANE FONDA AS AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE URGENCY OF ACHIEVING EARLY INTEGRATION OF THE LIF, I PRESSED HIM TO FOCUS HIS ATTENTION ON THIS QUESTION AS WELL AS ON FURTHER FORCE LEVEL REDUCTIONS. SISOUK SAID THAT HE WOULD GET ON TO THIS RIGHT AWAY BUT STATED THAT HE BELIEVED THAT A FAR GREATER NUMBER OF LIF SOLDIERS HAD BEEN INTERGRATED THAN I KNEW. WE AGREED TO CHECK ON OUR RESPECTIVE FACTS AND TO MEET LATER IN THE WEEK TO REVIEW THE LEVELS OF CURRENT FAR/FAN/LIF STRENGTHS.

2. TURNING TO BROADER ISSUES, SISOUK SAID THAT HE WAS GRAVELY CONCERNED OVER THE IMPENDING CONFRONTATION  
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BETWEEN THE PATHET LAO AND THE VIENTIANE SIDE OVER

THE OPENING OF THE ASSEMBLY. SISOUK NOTED THAT THE ENTIRE CABINET HAD AGREED TO A PARADE IN WHICH BOTH FAR AND PATHET LAO SOLDIERS WOULD PARTICIPATE BUT THAT THE PATHET LAO HAD NOW UNILATERALLY REVERSED THIS DECISION. FURTHERMORE, THE QUESTION OF THE OPENING OF THE ASSEMBLY BY THE KING COULD LEAD TO SERIOUS DISTURBANCES WHICH THE PATHET LAO WOULD EXPLOIT. STUDENT GROUPS WERE BEING EXHORTED BY THE PL TO PREVENT THE KING'S PARTICIPATION AND A SITUATION MIGHT WELL ARISE IN WHICH PL FORCES IN LUANG PRABANG OR VIENTIANE MIGHT CHOOSE TO INTERVENE. SISOUK SAID THAT HE HAD JUST MET WITH DEP CINC FAR KOU PRASITH AND ENJOINED HIM TO KEEP COOL AND SEEK TO AVOID THE INVOLVEMENT OF FAR PERSONNEL IN ANY DISTURBANCES.

3. SISOUK SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW THE ASSEMBLY SHOULD BE DISBANDED BUT IT WAS OUTRAGEOUS FOR THE PATHET LAO TO PRETEND THAT THEY DID NOT SUPPORT THE CONSTITUTION. IT WAS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THEY SHOULD NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THE AUTHORITY OF THE ASSEMBLY BUT THEIR ANTI-CONSTITUTION STATEMENTS WERE A NEW AND DISTURBING FACTOR IN THE POLITICAL EQUATION HERE. IN SOME WAYS THE FORTHCOMING CRISIS WAS THE FAULT OF THE PRIME MINISTER WHO HAD NOT BEEN SUFFICIENTLY STERN IN DEMANDING COMPLIANCE BY THE PATHET LAO IN THE AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOL. REFERENCES BY PHOUMI VONGVICHIT AND PATHET LAO RADIO TO IMPERIALIST DESIGNS ON LAOS WERE A PRETEXT WHICH THE PL WOULD USE TO JUSTIFY THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE IN THIS COUNTRY. SOUVANNA SHOULD KEEP NORTH VIETNAMESE WITHDRAWAL AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PGNU FOR BOTH ZONES UPPERMOST IN GOVERNMENT DELIBERATIONS.

4. I TOLD SISOUK I WAS CONCERNED BY THE UNCHANGED TONE OF PATHET LAO BROADCASTS AND WAS NOT EXACTLY ENCHANTED WITH PHOUMI'S INTERVIEW WITH THE JAPANESE COMMUNISTS AND JANE FONDA. I SAID THAT IN RECENT WEEKS I HAD DONE MY UTMOST WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS OF BOTH SIDES TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO THE PROMPT RELEASE OF POW EMMET KAY BUT HAD HAD NO RESPONSE TO THESE APPEALS.

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5. SISOUK SAID THAT HE WAS GOING TO MEET URGENTLY WITH FINANCE MINISTER NGON SANANIKONE AND OTHERS AND THAT HE HOPED TO SEE THE PRIME MINISTER THIS AFTERNOON. IN MANY WAYS DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE FORMATION OF THE PGNU HAD BEEN MOST SATISFACTORY BUT THE PRESENT TACK BEING TAKEN BY THE PATHET LAO WAS DISTURBING.

6. WE WILL BE REPORTING FULLY ON THIS FIRST CON-  
FRONTATION BETWEEN THE PATHET LAO AND THE VIENTIANE  
SIDE AS IT DEVELOPS. AT THE MOMENT I CONTINUE TO  
BE HOPEFUL THAT AS HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST, THE LAO  
WILL FIND SOME FORMULA TO SLIDE AROUND THE COLLISION  
COURSE ON WHICH THEY APPEAR TO BE.  
WHITEHOUSE

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## Message Attributes

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